



Ivy Leaves

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Anderson College

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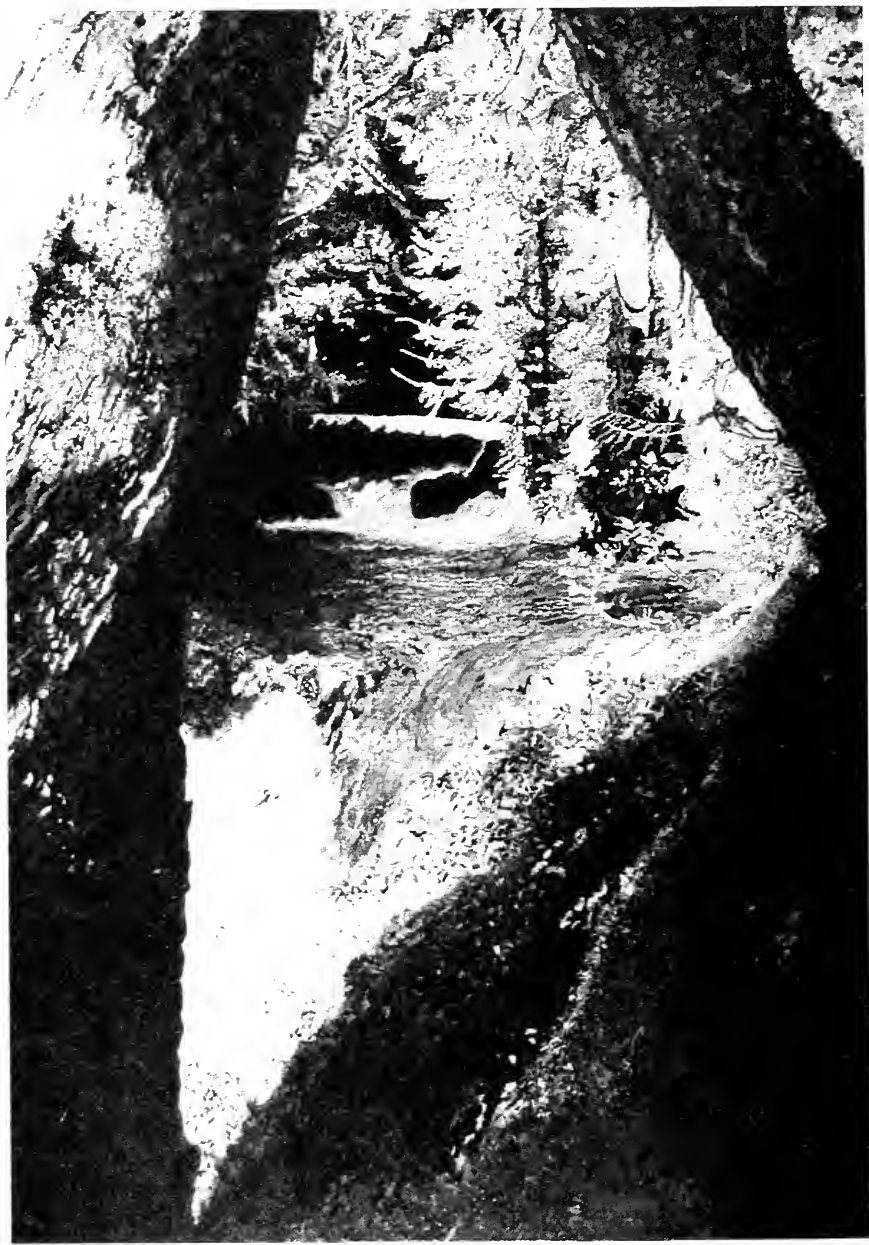
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Lost in Myself

Love is not love that is founded on yourself.
She loved me; I loved that more than I love her.
Her soft, trembling voice strengthened my security.
Her smile, her lovely dimples accenting soft lips,
Constantly reminded me that I was perfect for her.
And I am wretched; my pride built our foundation.
Too impressed with finally being good enough,
I refused to humor any idea of failure.

So I took that starting point, that false foundation,
And I tried to love her, only to indulge in my greatness.
Her gentle and confident laugh, which crisply pierced
 silence,
Echoed clearly in my head, purging my humility.
Self-esteem has been banged into my brain,
And all this Freudian nonsense has made
Me believe the lie that I am good enough.
Lost in this façade of perfection, I have now lost her.

—*Asa Moran*



Serenity

Heather Vaughn
oil on canvas

The Shallow End

Back when we were teenagers the summer
Seemed much longer and the moments were rich.
I remember seeing Sera lying on a warm rock
By the shallow end of the swimming hole
And looking like nature's princess,
The water glistening on her tanned legs.

The sun shone off of them as if she'd been born
To the river and the whitewashed stones that gathered
About the edge of the pool of water.
I heard the river sing songs to her only.
She was a religion in herself.
I realized lately that Sera wasn't the essence

Of only that moment, but of all my moments after.
Being old had brought me to the deep end.
The years have been much kinder to her,
And even with this age on my face
She moves briskly down the street, smiling
At how I love her.

—*Jim A. McElhannon*

The Promenade

It was the season of our love.
We met on the grassy hillside
That cool spring day
Beneath the blossoming tree.

Your cheeks reflected the hue of my dress
And your lips were stained by wine.
Love danced between our gazes
And mingled in our words.

I smiled shyly as you took my hand
And drew me closer in.
Your charming smile and inviting eyes
Carried me away.

And on our love I soared—
As you, delighted, watched.
We left the hillside that spring day
To laugh, in love, among the clouds.

—*Diedre Evans*

Searching

In this blizzard of so-called snow
We search for reasons to know
Ice and fire we try mixing
We freeze and burn dreadfully slow.

We only talk missing it all.
You have another—wife she's called
Why, not once but twice, answered ice
No, to say yes would shatter wall.

We were meant to be bound apart
Hours wondering how to sort
Burnt bits from frozen icicles
Life's wicked memories sear hearts.

We are two halves to never whole,
As we wait, taking our frail souls
Life takes its bitter icy toll,
Life takes its bitter icy toll.

—*F. Theresa Gillard*



Untitled

Jason Long

charcoal and conte

New Orleans

color-darkened lines of the street vendor
a nose much like hers
eyes that do not quite dance
as hers do
but hair that falls very naturally
and a mouth that smiles
much as Sarah's does
it was a quick moment
caught on paper by a man to whom I paid
five hours worth of my work
so that when I'm old I will remember
New Orleans
and I will smile

—*Joe Moore*

Goodbye, Again

You phoned to say, "I miss you." Your voice small.
I smile and think, how nice of you to call.
You with parachute, never leaving ground
Searching below for what you think is found.
You say that fear led things to go awry.
I say, "I miss your dog," and hear you sigh.

—*F. Theresa Gillard*

"Blinded"

Sweet brownie-eyed boy
You were supposed to be mine
but *she* ate your eyes.

—*Julia Nelson*



Untitled

Chris Dunagan
photography

halfway down 414
well beyond my allotted time
when I pull over in a station with a "We Now Accept Visa" sign
I'm deep in love
deeper in trouble
I should have been on time tonight
my rescue is just
these little things I must do
to be

the roses of romance lie
by a stack of Marlboro reds
the 87 octane lover boys
have a long way
to go yet
it's not that I'd be happy on my own
just that I know no other roads
than love beyond the five and dime
and beauty by
a gas station rose

just the story of a Romeo
struggling just to keep his Juliet
and it's not that she's all that beautiful
she's just the best girl I could have kept
we're not going up
but we're not heading down
somehow got stuck here in this life
she's just part of my day
she's part of all I say and do

but the roses of romance lie
by the same stack of Marlboro reds
the 87 octane lover boys
have a long way
to go yet
and it's not that I'd be happy on my own
just that I know no other roads
than love beyond the five and dime
and beauty by
a gas station rose

Silk

Walking by the creek on a sunny afternoon.
Something magnificent grabs my eyes.
Letting my knees kiss the cool green grass
I move like an inchworm to get a closer look.

The colors are like a sunflower but
Her back is lightly sprinkled with powder.
Winding and spinning her silk home
Thin spiral-like strands defining the center.

My kneecaps looked like fossils of grass.
Trying not to interrupt the peacefulness
I reached out to touch the artwork.
Before my eyes was another world unlike mine.

I watched every delicate move she made.
Moving so soft almost afraid to tear the silk trap.
Waiting for a victim to be ambushed into the deathly prison
Eagerly anticipating the fresh red juices for nourishment.

—Kelli Stone

October 31

Halloween's worst on him
Child who saw his mother die
On the exciting dress-up night of the year.
Pop found another jackal to feast on his time.
Got so drunk he strangled his wife in front of the
children.

The masks of that night consumed every face
He'd see during his life; as an only son, scarred
With the most beautiful woman in his life, gone.
Known to be crazy, he sits in the hallway humming
Gershwin and eating candy corn and smelling flowers
His only sister brings.

For ten years he sat on the street corner during
daylight
Singing about spoons full of sugar.
The night brought the classical music from his radio.
He didn't know why everyone had to "be" something.
And asked about his meaning he asks,
"How many times have you seen a beautiful set of
eyes?"
I asked if he was cold
Because he'd put on a sweater.
"Isn't it still cold on Halloween, doctor?"
"Yes."
"I haven't forgotten?"
"I guess not, Steve."

I'm in charge of the east wing, but I understand
nothing.
Most of the patients have beautiful eyes.
Comfort is at work.
Taken through the wringer, they've got me.
Too many dinners with the family,
Too many nights in the lab, dogmatic institutions,
Decorum and virtue,
The season of the witch is upon us.

I put my mask on the dresser starting tomorrow.
Steve seems like a much more interesting guy.

—Jim McAlhannon

Elevator

Otis opens
His steel gray doors
Slowly separate
The gap widens
People push on
Weary-footed
Individuals in
Suffocating shoes
Men in pointed-toe
Leather oxfords
Women in their
Highly shined
High heels, unsteady
They lean against
The paneled walls
Plastered with posters
Advertising an Internet
Provider asking
Where do you want to go today?
People fidget nervously
Avoiding eye contact
As they wait to reach
Their push button
Departure points
Floor by floor
Doors open/close
People pass through
Seldom speaking
Other than to ask
For a button to be pushed
They pass the time
Till the doors open
At their desired floor
And they exit
Still believing up/down
Is a destination
Never realizing
Elevators lead nowhere
They simply stop
Then continue
In their constant state
Motion

—*Tammy Powell*

The Avenue Hotel

She asked to take my order
I asked her
If she was Maryanne
And if the restaurant was named for her
She said she wasn't
But her grandmother was
So I told her I'd take eggs over easy

No

She was Julie
Julie from Henryville, Kentucky
Exit 53 off of Interstate 640
The biggest piece of nothing I'd ever seen
A truck stop terra incognita to say the least

She knew I didn't belong
She asked where I was going
I knew she didn't belong
But she was never leaving
"Home" I reply
Returning from a trip to Chicago

She leaned down
Really close
She let her blonde hair bombard my table
And
Through thin strands she told me
She's gonna go

She tells me she could leave right now
With a Tennessee trucker
But she is waiting—
I know she is waiting
She tells me that it is her dream
To go and stay in the Avenue Hotel

I know the Avenue Hotel
It's closed-boarded up—
I look up through her blonde Kentucky weeds
Desperately trying to make eye contact
Wanting to tell her what I know
But I don't want her to stay
Like I don't want to get home

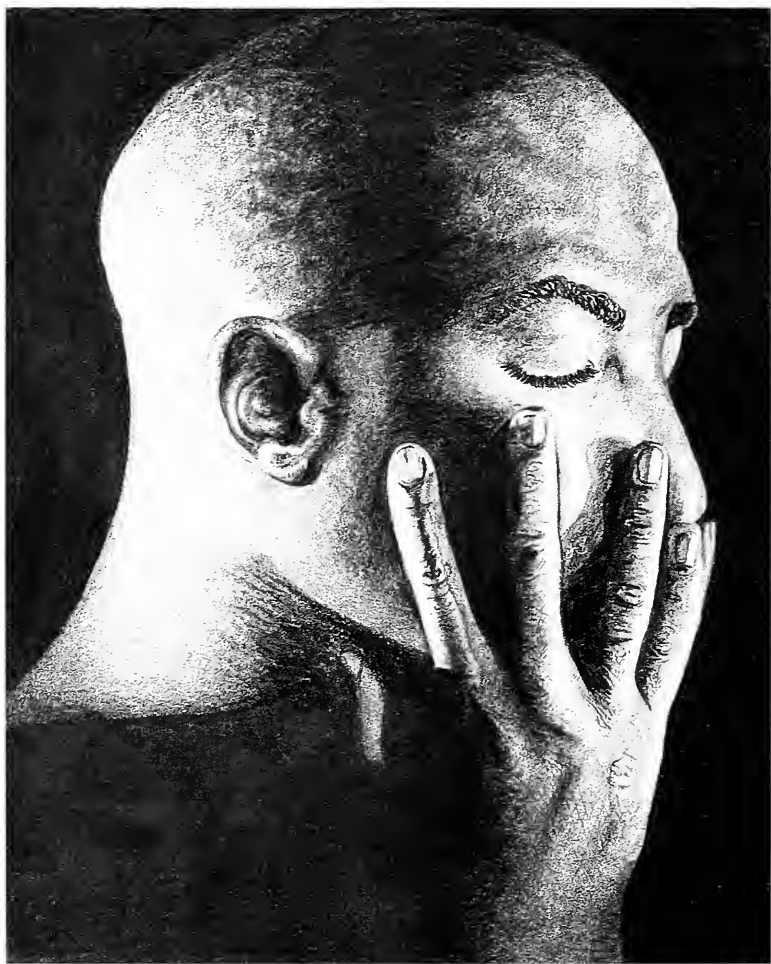
—Brandy Dorsey

“ Unnursed ”

I never chose not to nurse you.
I had offered my body to you
For nine months and offered it again
like a loving mother would,
and you wouldn't take it.
But the choice wasn't yours either,
Your great-grandmother chose convenience,
the miracle of technology freeing her.
And a generation was born
that wouldn't have survived
two hundred years ago.
As I fed you your bottle,
my milk—
your milk spilling down my chest,
I thought of the unnursed,
bottles propped under receiving blankets
until they can hold their own,
no longer joined to the mothers
they were ripped from,
no longer held close and caressed,
suckling the essence of life.

—Heather S. Ifversen





untitled

Kisha Thompson
graphite

After My Great-Grandmother's Funeral

I loved her,
(god, I loved her)
but she never let me close
enough to know her.
I remember her
tight lips, stone face,
standing arms crossed
at the doorway
so we couldn't escape
the den.
After her funeral,
I changed my daughter
on her bedspread
in a room
I had never been in
while relatives—
strangers told me
how she dreamed of going to college,
how she crept in late after dates.
Their laughter ended in
a sudden hush, eyes glistening
and aware, like birds sensing danger,
these dream-bereaved people
who soak up their descendants' dreams
as if spilled from a child's cup,
as if to imply that we
can become dreamless, too
and I realize
maybe I can—
but maybe
they never dreamed they could.

—Heather S. Ifversen

The Candle

A candle slowly burns
The pink and orange merge.
Soft honey flame and pink beeswax
Graze one another nervously,
To form warm nectar.

Nestled within the golden arms of candelabrum,
It seems regal and clever to most.
But ask the hanging tapestry near the door
Speak to the long satin quilt over the bed,
Converse with the maple dining chair;
Recoiling from the berry scent of hot paraffin.
Most will tell you
That only flesh can speak, but
Not all.

I have seen the wax and flame
Lick upon the hem of my dreams,
Spring and grow upon the polyblend of me,
Silently clinging to the essence of skin and bones—
Blazing and burning continuously;
All in the name of warmth and protection,
Until my flesh will no longer speak
And I become my house.

—*Adrienne Geer*



Honey Jar

Plunge into a jar of honey
Float through its topaz light.
Let others crave chocolate
or swirl in caramel desires,
drench me in honey.
Encased, it seems serene;
simply sugared, orange bumblebee
kisses.

Released, it's untame
Its sweet tongued whispers tickle
my lips,
a smooth river of gold rippling
in my mouth
hissing softly, seductively
over my tingling taste buds
then somersaults off my tongue
to satisfy my hunger.

—*Julia Nelson*

Watermelon

Used to, when we'd eat watermelon
Grandpa would tell us,

 "Eat a seed, and you'll grow
a watermelon vine,"

And we'd look at him

 to see if he was crazy
or laughing at us.

Then, we'd see the twinkle
in his eye,

and know it was all a joke.

Now when I see a watermelon,

I smile to myself

and remember us

around the kitchen table,

and

the sound of that big melon

opening with a sigh

after the first knife cut,

and the pull of Grandpa's hands

as the green skin opened

and the ruby red fruit appeared

like wet shiny lips

gasping

in surprise.

—Margaret B. Hayes

Knot-Head & Air-Head

As a child, I was quiet and dutiful
Following mama around,
nodding in agreement
Until I turned 14 and didn't
want to be a Baptist anymore...
Every day of my teenage life
we had a spat or four.
She was "ignorant" and lost her temper
and I, like my "damn" father,
sat calm and indifferent.
Mama tried glaring fear into me with her eyes
but I made her cry by cutting with double-bladed words
that burned with guilt.

As I've matured, Mama and I are tolerant
Of each other and work harmoniously
On the flower gardens at home;
Until I plant wildflowers around the peace roses.

—*Julia Nelson*



Self Portrait
Sunny Mullarkey
oil on canvas